

LOOKING BEYOND THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS:
SUSTAINING A VIABLE OUTREACH MINISTRY

A Professional Project
presented to
the Faculty of ~~the~~
Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

~~b~~
By

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May 2007

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has been presented to and accepted by the
faculty of Claremont School of Theology in
partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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Due to extenuating circumstances, final edits were not completed for this project.

Abstract

Looking Beyond the Stained Glass Windows:

Sustaining a Viable Outreach Ministry

by

Kathey Michelle Harry Wilborn

The problem addressed by this project is how does a church look beyond the stained glass windows of the sanctuary and sustain a viable outreach ministry? The project identifies three critical issues to sustaining a viable outreach ministry: a strong host organization, a diversity of leadership and a variety of financial resources. The project identifies how a strong host organization whether a church or board of directors is critical to the fundamental base of a ministry. Leadership is another critical issue in sustaining a viable outreach ministry. A personality driven ministry does not provide for a viable outreach ministry but needs to have a diversity of leadership, which may include volunteer and paid. The asset of having a strong volunteer base is critical to a viable outreach ministry as it is often driven by financial limitations they may restrict staffing funds. Therefore, it is critical to a viable outreach ministry that a variety of funding sources sustain the ministry. The project identifies a variety of financial options to ministry including charitable choice, traditional and non-traditional church funding.

This project is grounded in a Womanist Theology. It is in looking through the lens of Womanist Theologians that language is identified from an African-American woman's Christian perspective in identification of the critical need for communities within the California Pacific Annual Conference to look beyond the stained glass windows of the sanctuary and have a viable outreach ministry. Womanist theology provides insights into the mission and ministry of women carrying the culture and history of the community.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my profound thanks to my academic advisor, Dr. Lincoln Galloway who mentored my completion of this project. I am thankful to his words of encouragement, guidance and wisdom to the completion of this project. I am grateful to Professor Michael Mata who has seen my personal and professional transitions through the years. His wisdom and knowledge of the subject has helped in shaping my ministry and helping me to integrate my ministries of disciple-making and social welfare. I am thankful to Dr. Kathy Black and Dr. Karen Baker-Fletcher who increased my knowledge base of womanist theology and provided a form for dialogue and integration of my personal theology.

I am forever thankful to the many men and women that have nurtured my journey through the various ministry stations of life: St. John's United Methodist Church, First U.M.C. of Compton, Crenshaw U.M.C., Calvary U.M.C., Saint Justin Educational Fund (Ascending Light Ministries), Beverly Hospital, South Bay Bright Future Youth Development Centers, Hollypark U.M.C., and Living Into The Future Foundation (Long Beach District Foundation). I am thankful to my mentors Kay Moore, Martha Watson, Reverend John A. Greene, Reverend Robert Smith, Reverend L. L. C. Hammond, and Reverend William M. Hill.

I am thankful to the women of Steele Day Care - Opal Steele, Vada Haggins and Aleane Williams for their words of encouragement and care. I give praise and glory to my God for wisdom and knowledge and for allowing me to share in God's great plan.

Dedication

I dedicate the completion of this project to my husband Leonardo Vincent Wilborn, and to Michelle Legrace Wilborn, Ollie Mae Harry, Julius Harry Sr., Julius Harry, Jr., Kalcus Harry, Jerome Harry, the late Vince Harry and the great people of Hollypark United Methodist Church (Gardena, California) and South Bay Bright Future Youth Development Centers.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction.	1
Problem Addressed by the Project.....	1
Importance of the Problem	1
Thesis Statement.....	5
Definitions of Major Terms.....	6
Work Previously Done in the Field	8
Scope and Limitation of the Project.....	13
Procedure for Integration/Methodology.....	15
Chapter Outlines	17
2. Constructing an Ethics for the Practice of Ministry	19
Black Womanist Ethics	22
Zora Neal Hurston	23
Imago Dei	25
Love	33
Community	36
Constructing an Ethics for the Practice of Ministry	38
3. Exploring Options for Financing Outreach Ministry	43
Introduction	43

Personal Reflection	44
Traditional Means of Financing	45
Non-Traditional Means of Financing	47
The Church's Response to Charitable Choice	51
Conclusion	59
4. Ministries beyond the Stained Glass Window	61
Introduction	61
Case Studies	62
Case One: New Beginnings/New Transitions	64
Case Two: Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency.....	72
Case Three: Rakestraw Memorial Community Center.....	80
5. Reflections on Ministries Beyond The Stained Glass Window	86
Host/Sponsor Church Support.....	88
Leadership	89
Diversity of Funding	90
Implications for the Ebony Prophets.....	91
Bibliography	93

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Problem Addressed by the Project

The problem that this doctor of ministry project addresses is the challenges facing Churches located in communities with critical needs within the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to have viable outreach ministries that improve the quality of life for the people within the community.

Importance of the Problem

The general plan for the project is to explore critical criteria in sustaining a viable outreach ministry. This project was conceived because many United Methodist Churches located in urban centers and shepherded by black clergy, (a group of whom identify themselves as Ebony Prophets) lack the financial stability to provide and sustain adequate outreach ministries to meet the needs of the community in which they are located. The lack of financial resources creates a challenge for many of these churches to provide visible or sustainable outreach ministries that empower the community residents or contribute to an adequate quality of life.

Most Ebony Prophets pastor churches that have a long history of political and social involvement and awareness. Most have incorporated a core of commitments to justice and community uplift that reflect the long history of Black church traditions and ministry in the United States. For many Black churches this means that associated with dynamic worship must be a witness of social engagement.

The churches pastored by Ebony Prophets in the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church are unable to respond to opportunities for service because of inadequate finances to support outreach ministries. Church members express concern that without sufficient financing to meet the general budget of the church, an effective outreach ministry cannot be financed.

As the local church strives to become a safe haven for those needing "shelter", through her understanding of the needs of the community, it is critical to have the necessary resources. The lack of resources to enable outreach to the people in the neighborhood makes it difficult to model a form of ministry that honors the words of Jesus: "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40b, KJV). It has been the tradition of the Black Church to serve as the hub of information and meeting the needs of the community. However, many churches pastored by Ebony Prophets have experienced financial instability and are

therefore unable to respond adequately to the political, economic and social needs of the community. Therefore the church is left without the tools and mechanisms to enable persons to achieve an adequate quality of living.

First, the church's inability to fulfill its mission translates into diminished opportunities for evangelism. The inability to provide outreach ministries reduces the opportunity for those people outside the body of Christ to engage with those inside the particular congregation. The lost opportunity to receive a service from "the body of Christ" denies persons in the community the opportunity to experience the love of God as shared through the encounters with the people of God. People were drawn to Jesus because of their experience of His ministry (Matthew 8:1, 9:8, 9:33, 9:36-38). Engaging in outreach ministry is one way to allow persons outside of the church to experience the love of God as reflected in Jesus' ministry.

Secondly, the church's struggle with inadequate finances is related to the lost opportunity for staff expansion. The majority of Ebony Prophets in the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the UMC are sole pastors because of the churches limited ministries and financial resources. The lack of additional staff requires the pastor to design and limit her or his ministry around certain activities that the church's finances can sustain which may not include adequate outreach ministry within the surrounding

community. The church's ability to generate additional finances is related to its ability to provide greater outreach, increase its staff, and carry out the ministries of the church. Increased financial resources contribute to a broader-funding base, including members and supporters. However, engaging more members or supporters necessitates increased resources to provide critically needed services and ministry.

Some of my observations reflect my own social location as a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW, California), and also as a United Methodist pastor in an urban context. It has become apparent that as church people we have become increasingly dependent on money to execute ministry. I have been part of five United Methodist Churches (including my home church, an internship, and an associate and pastor-in-charge appointment) and have found it very disturbing that each of those congregations lacked the financial resources to respond adequately to the emotional, physical, financial and social needs of people within the community. I have thought that if the church had the necessary resources, it could increase its visibility, expand its service, and have greater impact on the lives of individuals who may require essential life skills, work skills, access to health care, childcare, affordable housing, mental health services, parenting skills or anger management.

The majority of Ebony Prophets within the California Pacific Annual Conference of the UMC finance outreach ministries through the

“traditional” means. Traditional refers to the tithes, offerings, rental income, and fundraisers. Ebony Prophets are not availing themselves of the opportunity to use public funds (charitable choice) to finance outreach ministries.

The perceived lack of financial resources creates three specific areas/dimensions of anguish for the church: lost opportunity for ministry and/or services, lost opportunity for evangelism and lost opportunity for staff expansion. The inability of the church to expand its financial portfolio limits the resources for greater involvement and expansion of needed and relevant ministries.

Thesis Statement

This project demonstrates through reflection on womanist theology and ethics and engagement with financial resourcing the importance of looking beyond traditional sources of financing outreach ministries that enable at risk communities to experience higher quality of life and encounter the embodiment of the church's ministry with respect to *imago dei*, love, and community which reflect the core commitments of the black church tradition.

Definitions of Major Terms

In this section there are terms that are used especially in discussions about finances. These include *financial stability*, *standard of living*, and *public funds*. Two terms that may need some clarification (*feminist* and *womanist* theology) are drawn from the discussion of theology and ethics. The final term (*Ebony Prophets*) is used to describe a group of black clergy in California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Financial Stability

Financial stability refers to a church's ability to meet its local needs as reflected in its budget and denominational responsibilities such as apportionments.

Standard of Living

Standard of living refers to persons having affordable housing, making living wages, adequate nutrition, adequate health care, safe recreational outlets and play opportunities, access to health care and childcare. Standard of living refers to person's ability to support one self financially or meet one's basic needs without dependence on public assistance.

Public Funds

Public Funds are those funds that are available resources for non-profit activity generated from taxpayers and administered through federal, state or local governmental agencies i.e. Los Angeles County, City of Los Angeles, and Department of Public Social Service.

Charitable Choice

Charitable Choice is a provision in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 that allows groups including faith based organizations to participate in the use of public funds for the purpose of meeting social needs without discrimination from federal or state agencies. These groups contract to offer services that help persons become self-supporting. These may include job readiness training, educational programs, and various life skill development programs.

Feminism and Womanism

The term feminism refers to those organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interest. The term womanism is related to feminism and focuses especially on the conditions and concerns of black women. The term "womanist" was coined in 1983 by Alice Walker. The concept of

"Womanist theology is based in part on Walker's definition of 'Womanist' which emphasizes a love for Black woman's history and culture."¹

Ebony Prophets

Ebony Prophets constitute an informal fellowship of the black clergy consisting of local pastors, elders, and deacons who pastor churches within the geographic boundaries of the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.²

Work Previously Done in the Field

Much has been written in the area of church finances from the perspective of giving and stewardship. This approach encourages congregations to develop and practice healthy habits of giving as a spiritual discipline. Some of these texts focus on clarifying stewardship and

¹ Karen Baker-Fletcher and Garth Kasimu Baker-Fletcher, My Sister, My Brother: Womanist and Xodus God-Talk (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 3.

² The majority of the Ebony Prophets are within the Los Angeles Metropolitan area, which is further challenged with changing demographics surrounding the church. There are 22 self-identified "black" congregations: One in the San Diego District (St. Paul), 14 in the Los Angeles District (Crenshaw, Calvary, Holman, Vermont Square, Bowen Memorial, Hamilton, Wesley, Martin Luther King, Jr., St. Paul, First UMC-Inglewood, Saint Mark, Faith, Grace and St. John's), four in the Long Beach District (Crossroad, Lynwood, First-Compton, Hollypark (Gardena), two in the Pasadena district, (Scott, Altadena), and one in the Santa Barbara (First UMC Pacoima). There are currently 47 Ebony Prophets as identified by the writer: Reginald Copeland, Tonya Harris, Kathey Michelle Wilborn, Mary Walton, Regina Roberts, William M. Hill, Roger DeMarr, Fredrick Johnson, Cedrick Bridgeforth, Robert Smith, Andrew Robinson-Gaither, Paul Hill, Robert Campbell, Louis Chase, Henry Master, Sr., Lesa Smith, Eugenio Raphael, DiAnn Johnson, L.L.C. Hammond, Charles Burt, Margaret Finnie, Cavalain Hawkins, Thomas Hill, Cherrye Cunnigan, James Stevenson, Stephen Howard, John Green, Adrienne Zackery, Osmond Lindo, Sr., LeRoy Brown, Willie Foreman, Jerry Andre Wilson, Garth Gilliam, Sara Armstrong, Charlene Zuill, Okechukwu Ogbonnaya, Kenneth Waters, Jorinda Bullitt, John Kilgore, Sylvester T. Gillespie, Robert Habersham, Clayton Hammond, Zan Holmes, James Lawson, Jr., James Lyles, and Cornish Rogers.

financial giving from the perspective of the tithe.³ Although the focus on individual stewardship is vital for the life and witness of the church, it is also important to recognize that some churches are overwhelmed by the challenges of doing ministry in communities that are at risk. In some cases, the needs of the community require responses that far outweigh the financial resources of the local congregation. Some writers have built on the traditional ways and have expanded our understanding of financing outreach ministries.

Lyle Schaller is one writer whose work deals with financing outreach ministries. He examines a variety of ways in which churches have traditionally financed their ministries.⁴ Then he goes on to describe ways of engaging the members of a faith community to support ministry and outreach of the church. He is concerned with motivating congregations to be more generous in their financial stewardship in order to underwrite the expenses of ministry. However, he shows that there are other options for growing the financial base of a faith community.

Donald Joiner is another writer who is concerned with creating a climate for giving. He encourages church leaders to take responsibility to manage the finances of the church and to create a culture of giving that brings into being a community of philanthropists. For Joiner, this includes

³ See George A. E. Salstrand, The Tithe: The Minimum Standard for Christian Giving (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952); Terzo Natalini, A Historical Essay on Tithes: A Collection of Sources and Texts (Washington, D.C.: National Catholic Stewardship Council, 1973).

⁴ Lyle E. Schaller, 44 Ways to Expand the Financial Base of your Congregation (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989).

finding ways to help people give with excitement, creating systems that sustain the financial base of the church, raising funds, funding ministries, and creating fresh opportunities for giving.⁵

Michael Durall writes to invite the church to look beyond the collection plate and to seek ways to overcome the obstacles to faithful giving. Durall argues that the church can access financial resources that will allow the church to create healthy and vital ministries. He wants leaders to understand the emerging world and operate a thriving church that the public can trust, and that will embody the mission and teaching of Jesus in the world.⁶

One text that seeks to address the issue of financing is a volume edited by Clifford A. Jones, Sr. This volume seeks to present a unique African American Approach to Stewardship. It examines patterns, trends, and customs that are critical for understanding how to develop diversified ministries in the twenty-first century. It examines the challenges that will confront the African American Christian Church and seeks to affirm its understanding of biblical stewardship as well as its commitments to social engagement. Financial stewardship is not an end in itself but rather a means by which the church can actualize the ministries and mission of Christ.⁷

⁵ Donald W. Joiner, Creating a Climate for Giving (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2001).

⁶ Michael Durall, Beyond the Collection Plate (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).

⁷ Clifford A. Jones, ed. From Proclamation to Practice (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1993).

Kennon L. Callahan has written extensively in the area of Church finances. His works include Effective Church Finances, and Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church. He is concerned with the relationship between mission and money and calls for a balance between the two. He believes that people will give if they are aware of the church's mission rather than giving that is aimed at church maintenance. For Callahan, mission is the primary goal and is done for its own sake. He states, "We do mission for the integrity of the mission. Mission is the goal in itself."⁸

More recently, the church has recognized the need to expand its financial base. This sometimes means partnering with private as well as governmental agencies for the purpose of helping persons become self supporting and also to respond to the needs of the broader community. Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 provides the opportunity for faith based organization (FBOs) to seek public funds in providing services to meet basic human needs.⁹ When church and state cooperate, it demonstrates that the Welfare Reform "made it possible for charities, churches, and other faith-based organizations to deliver publicly funded services to the needy-especially mothers and children-under contracts with the state."¹⁰ It further reminds one that

⁸ Kennon L. Callahan, Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 4. See also Callahan, Effective Church Finances (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1992).

⁹ National Congress for Community Economic Development. Religious Access to Government Funds: Church-State Issues. Faith Based Community Economic Development Bulletin. August 1999, 1-4.

¹⁰ National Congress, 1-4.

under the welfare reform law the monies are available for service that does not promote "worship, sectarian instruction or proselytization."¹¹ Although these monies are available, the articles do not provide specifics on the type of services nor the specific agencies to contact in order to access these monies. The law concludes that "through both public and private means we work to insure that no child goes without the basic human needs of food, shelter, and health care."¹²

Using public funds to finance faith-based organizations entered the 2004 United States Presidential debate. President George W. Bush promised to "pour billions in federal funds into the coffers of religious groups to perform social service if he is elected."¹³ Bush affirming the distribution of public funds to faith-based groups further stated, "We will look first to faith-based institutions, to charities and to community groups that have shown their ability to save and change lives."¹⁴ Bush gets around the issues surrounding church and state by indicating that he will "fund services" not "religious programs."¹⁵

President Bush acknowledged the valuable services/ministries that faith-based organizations are providing, capable of providing and willing to provide. During his initial campaign efforts, President Bush did not provide any specific plans for getting the money from the federal

¹¹ National Congress, 1-4.

¹² National Congress, 1-4.

¹³ National Congress, 1-4.

¹⁴ National Congress, 1-4.

¹⁵ National Congress, 1-4.

government to the treasury of faith-based organizations. He did not mention how faith-based organizations need to articulate their services from a language of religion to a language of public funding.¹⁶

Once President Bush was elected of the Faith-Based Initiative was established, which further developed the Welfare Reform Law on charitable choice. President Bush created the "White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and Centers for Faith-Based and Community initiatives in ten Federal agencies to lead a determined attack on need by strengthening and expanding the role of FBOs in providing social services." ¹⁷ The initiative hopes to provide a "more open and competitive Federal grant-making process" that hopefully will increase the delivery of effective social services to those needs are greatest.

Scope and Limitations of the Project

This project focuses on three outreach ministries centered in three communities in which black congregations are located. The project is concerned with the challenges that are encountered by many Ebony Prophets within the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United

¹⁶ The translation may look something like literature also known as Old Testament Survey, Youth Fellowship to Youth Community Center, and Music Appreciation instead of choir rehearsal, pastoral counseling to mental health counseling

¹⁷ National Congress, 1-4.

Methodist Church.¹⁸ However, the findings and recommendations are applicable to all churches that have limited financial resources and are challenged by mission opportunities that require resources that are greater than the offering plate can sustain.

These ministries were accessible and reflected a diversity of funding options, leadership arrangements, and host congregation involvement. The case studies are not fully representative of all of the outreach ministries within the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Further, they do not reflect all the outreach ministries that are currently engaged in by churches pastured by Ebony Prophets. However, these case studies provide helpful insights for churches that are currently engaged in or desire to implement outreach ministries that reflect the mission of the church.

This project examines these case studies with a view towards dealing with the larger question of having churches become more aware of their options for diversifying their financial resources. The project explores ways of understanding the intersection between church and government partnerships. It was not envisioned as a step by step guide for writing proposals for accessing private or public funds.

¹⁸ Sixty-three percent (63%) of the Black congregations are located within the Los Angeles and specifically within the city limits of Los Angeles. The statistical distribution of the Ebony Prophets is as follows: retired and not serving a church – 14.8%; retired and serving a church – 2.1%; Pastor-in-charge (Black congregation) – 40.4%; Pastor-in-charge (non-Black congregation) – 14.85%; Associate (Black congregation) – 4.2%; Associate (non-Black congregation) – 4.2%; Campus Minister – 2.1%; Professor – 2.1%; Extension Ministry – 7.5%; Leave of Absence – 7.5%; and Out-of-Conference – 2.1%.

Procedure for Integration/Methodology

A part of this project is an integration of theological and ethical reflections that draw on Womanist perspectives to establish a framework for understanding ministries of the church in the context of communities of overwhelming need. It draws heavily on the work of Katie Cannon who engages African American women's literary traditions to provide a glance into the moral agency of women, and black women, in particular, as well as that of the African American community.

This project also pays attention to areas of public funding, urban ministry, and community development. It seeks to help churches to look beyond the tithes and offerings of the collection plate and directs attention to the ways in which the church can expand its financial base to include access to public funds.

This project examines the work of three outreach ministries in which Ebony Prophets were involved. Although they do not reflect all the outreach ministries in which Ebony Prophets are involved, these ministries were accessible, and they reflect a diversity of funding options, leadership arrangements, and host congregation involvement. I conducted a case study of each of these three outreach ministries to broaden my understanding of the ways in which they were able to plan, and conduct outreach ministries to the communities that they serve.

In conducting these case studies, I used a variety of approaches. In the first case study, I drew upon personal experience and created a narrative to describe the sequence of events that gave rise to the program. I reflected upon the church's attempt to address a growing need that was brought to its attention. I also examined the role of key persons who were instrumental in making the program a reality.

In the second case study, I drew also upon my own knowledge of the district. I interviewed some of the key staff persons, and board members in an attempt to understand the outreach program. In addition to my own observations, I had access to the data from the records of the program from which I could learn about the operations of the program.

In the third case study, I also had personal knowledge of this program. In addition, I interviewed key personnel including volunteers, staff, pastor, and members of the board of directors. Overall, these case studies relied on data from these ministries that was derived from personal experience, interviews and public records. In these cases, I relied heavily on the findings that resulted from interviews with the three Ebony Prophets who were involved with these programs. In some cases, the individual was critical in the start-up, or ongoing ministry, or may have inherited the leadership of the ministry upon her arrival to that congregation. The case studies provide insights into strengths and opportunities in addressing community needs within the structure of the selected churches.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 2: Constructing an Ethic for the Practice of Ministry

This chapter provides a framework in which to understand how a Womanist ethic informs the practice of ministry. It highlights a womanist theological perspective including the works Karen Baker Fletcher, Emilie Townes, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern. It engages the categories of *imago dei*, love, and community as found in the works of Katie Cannon. The primary purpose is to explore and engage questions that are asked from the theological ethics of the Black Church and to discuss the implications in terms of outreach ministries within surrounding communities.

Chapter 3: Exploring Options for Financing Outreach Ministry

This chapter addresses the ways that the church has traditionally financed ministries. It further gives an overview and understanding of other options for financing ministries which include partnerships with public entities. These include charitable choice, and federal government faith based initiatives.

Chapter 4: Ministries Beyond the Stained Glass Window

This chapter examines three specific cases that use or attempt to use public funds to finance outreach ministries. These ministries are New Beginnings/New Transitions (Crenshaw United Methodist, Los Angeles), Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency (Wesley United Methodist Church, Long

Beach), and Rakestraw Memorial Center (Wesley United Methodist Church, Los Angeles). A section on theological reflection draws on the theological perspectives raised in chapter two.

Chapter 5: Reflections on Ministries Beyond the Stained Glass Window

This chapter summarizes the findings of the case studies. It offers further reflections in conversation with womanist perspectives, and finally it offers several principles for viable and sustainable outreach ministries for communities pastored by ebony prophets.

CHAPTER 2

Constructing an Ethic for the Practice of Ministry

Remembering the words of our women who came before us,
We must walk the path of the struggle, not by ourselves, but we must walk it.
Not to do so is to die forever.¹

African American women have made a vast contribution to the theological community. I am one African American woman in the midst of many African American women continuing to tell and live the story. Karen Baker-Fletcher in her book, My Sister, My Brother provides a conceptual framework from which she presents many terms, concepts, and ideas.² Baker-Fletcher engages in each section with Garth Kasimu Baker-Fletcher who presents a Xodus God-Talk perspective. The dialogues provide continuous insight into a Womanist perspective.³

This Womanist perspective continued to resonate in the writing of Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan's work, Exorcizing Evil: A Womanist Perspective on

¹ A paraphrase cited by Katie Geneva Cannon, Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1995), 175.

² Baker-Fletcher and Baker-Fletcher, My Sister, My Brother.

³ During my D.Min. course work I took two classes that were influential in shaping my theological and ethical perspectives as I tried to combine theory and practice in the context of ministry. The two courses, which were both taught by Karen Baker-Fletcher, were "Womanist Theology" and "Theology, Ethics and Culture." In taking "Womanist Theology," it was my desire to explore the various writings by African American Women in theology as I was preparing for the pastoral role within the United Methodist Church. My previous studies for the Master of Divinity introduced me to the autobiographies of several African American women preachers. However, the various readings in the womanist theology course provided me with a sense of sisterhood and helped me to name many things that I had experienced.

the Spirituals.⁴ Kirk-Duggan illustrates how a Womanist perspective applied to the spirituals provides a fresh look into how justice is exorcized using spirituals. She analyses several spirituals followed by a "faith and thought" narrative providing further theological insight.

Professors Miller-McLemore and Gill-Austern brought together several pastoral care theologians in Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology⁵ This book brings together concepts of Feminist and Womanist thought on pastoral theology. Gill-Austern reports, "Feminist and Womanist pastoral theology, in its method and content, focuses on the deep relationality that strengthens life-giving and healing connection in persons' lives."⁶ These pedagogues provide insight into feminist and womanist ways of teaching. Gill-Austern identifies that it is in the teaching experience, which is "a way of being in relationship"⁷that we increase the "love of God, neighbor, self, and all being." and it is in this approach that we "help mend our broken creation."⁸ The metaphors Gill-Austern chooses to reflect upon are "midwives, voice coaches, storytellers, contemplative artists, and as reticent outlaws."⁹ These pedagogues give

⁴ Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, Exorcizing Evil: A Womanist Perspective on the Spirituals (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997).

⁵ Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Brita L. Gill-Austern, eds. Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999).

⁶ Brita L. Gill-Austern, "Pedagogy Under the Influence of Feminists and Womanist," in, Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology, 150.

⁷ Gill-Austern, 150.

⁸ Gill-Austern, 150.

⁹ Gill-Austern, 151.

us a framework from which Womanist and feminist may practice which provides foundation for ministries within and beyond the church.

Emilie M. Townes in her book, In A Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness challenged me by her closing comments related to Apocalyptic Visions. Townes states that Spirituality as social witness means a lived experience of faith.¹⁰ The questions she raises need to be addressed by those in the practice of ministry. She asks four thought provoking questions: (1) Can we be people of faith in the midst of diversity? (2) What are we teaching the people? (3) What are we doing for the spiritual health of people? and (4) what are we saying to the people?. It is in these four questions that she believes that “love without justice is asking for trouble.”¹¹ Townes believes that “love ministers to our souls, lifts our spirits, assures our connection to one another and to God, and pulls us beyond ourselves. She believes that justice holds us accountable to the demands of love.”¹²

As I continue to reflect on the Womanist theology and Womanist Ethics one voice that I came to know was Katie Geneva Cannon. Cannon provided some great insights into her position that Black Women's literary works reflect moral wisdom. Cannon reports that “the focus of this Katie's Cannon is to show that Black women live out a moral

¹⁰ Emile M.Townes, In A Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995).

¹¹ Townes, In a Blaze, 141-43.

¹² Townes, In a Blaze, 143.

wisdom in their real-life context that does not seem to the fixed rules or absolute principles of the White-oriented, male-structured society."¹³ Cannon believed that the Black Women's literary tradition coincides with the history of Black people. Cannon uses the works of Zora Neale Hurston to reflect her position that Black Women's literature captured the soul of the black community. Cannon takes it a step further and asserts that two of Hurston's contemporaries, Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr., provide conceptual elements for enhancing the moral agency of Black women."¹⁴

In the rest of this chapter, I will examine the contributions that further my understanding of enhancing the moral agency of Black Women, through ideas of *Imago Dei*, love and community.

Black Womanist Ethics

Cannon does a great job of capturing "my story, my history" of African American women in her book Black Womanist Ethics. Cannon summarizes the experiences of African American women from early 17th Century until the late 20th Century. She tells of African American Women as not counted commodity, treated as brood-sow, or work-ox, in the context of slavery, legal servitude, sexual exploitation, and racial

¹³ Cannon, Katie's Cannon, 60.

¹⁴ Katie G. Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 160.

discrimination.¹⁵ She captures the reality of African American Women after the Civil War – as sharecroppers, farmhands, domestics, and educators.¹⁶ Cannon further discusses the reality of the Black Codes, Jim Crowism, and the “separate but equal law.” I appreciate Cannon not only telling the history starting from slavery but also including the migration of African American women from South to the North, from the rural to the urban. The story of slavery, migration and discrimination makes for a perplexed African American woman and African American community at large.

Zora Neal Hurston

Cannon looks at the work of the literary writer Zora Neal Hurston as one means of examining a black woman's ethics. It is Cannon's position that it is through African American women's literary tradition that one can get a glance into not only the moral agency of that particular woman but a glimpse into the African American community. I was not familiar with Hurston's stories before reading Black Womanist Ethics or Katie's Cannon. Alice Walker calls the type of moral agency represented by Hurston's work “unctuousness.”¹⁷ Hurston learned to reflect the world through her own eyes, her own experience, and her own judgment. Hurston did not

¹⁵ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 32.

¹⁶ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 46-50.

¹⁷ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 105.

capture the mythic life but “demythologized whole bodies of so-called social legitimacy”¹⁸

Hurston's concept of “quiet grace” as manifested in the stories of Jonah's Gourd Vine, Their Eyes Were Watching God, Moses, Man of the Mountain and Seraph of the Suwannee were appreciated for the vividness of images and richness of life lived out within the African American community. Cannon further reflects that “the profundity of Hurston's life and work was grounded in the seriousness with which she addressed the Black woman's sensibilities of ‘invisible dignity,’ ‘quiet grace,’ and ‘unshouted courage.’”¹⁹ Cannon speaks of quiet grace: “a power of moral character as truth that moves within, connects with other spirit beings, and builds community.”²⁰

Cannon connects the themes of Hurston's writings to two traditional male theologians, Howard Thurman, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Cannon comments that

As a black feminist of faith, I maintain that the cultural and historical support available to Hurston was the balm of Black religious heritage. By applying the faith claims of Christianity to the nuances and ambiguities of Black life, two of Hurston's contemporaries, Thurman and King, Jr., provide conceptual elements for interpreting the moral agency of Black women. The resources available in the theological vision require an explicit embrace of the ethical themes of imago dei, love as grounded in justice and the irreplaceable nature of community.²¹

¹⁸ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 105.

¹⁹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 159.

²⁰ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 159.

²¹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 160.

Cannon dialogues with Thurman and King around these essential themes. Both Thurman and King are essential figures in the African American community, as well as the national and international religious sphere.

Imago Dei

When one thinks about *imago dei*, one must begin with an understanding of God. Defining who God is becomes important in understanding in whose image one is created. Only after being clear whom God is can one see how God acts. It is in God's action of creation that one understands how she is created in God's image. According to Genesis 1:27-28a "... God created humankind in his image in the image, of God he created them: male and female he created them" (NRSV). The first question then to ask is who is God? For Moses, God became "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14) Karen Baker-Fletcher indicates in her book, My Sister, My Brother that "Womanist theologians have described God as a God of liberation, a God of survival, and a God of resistance against evil."²² Many of the spirituals indicate that God is a "father, mother, sister, brother, doctor, lawyer, friend, way out of no way, bridge" just to name a few.

²² Baker-Fletcher and ~~Kasim~~ Baker-Fletcher, My Sister, My Brother, 25.

Although it is not customary to describe God as solely female within the African American church, it is customary to speak of God as father, mother, sister, and brother. The church recognizes that we are created in God's likeness and God is Spirit. The Gospel of John reminds us of a very important fact that God is Spirit (Jn 4:24). Baker-Fletcher further elaborates on the fact that God has no gender and in fact, God is Spirit. She references Alice Walker's perspective that "God is not only within the human heart but within all of creation."²³

Cannon draws on the work of Howard Thurman to indicate the point that "Howard Thurman's exposition of the sacredness and inherent worth of every human being is uncompromising. The individual personality, as a "child of God", has ultimate significance. The sacredness of every human being is uncompromising because of the fact that everyone is created in the image of God."²⁴ Being created in the image of God does not provide status, priority, or any upper hand but rather provides a common ground for all of God's creation. Once humanity realizes the reality of sacredness, the respect of self becomes second nature. The notion of inherent worth of every human being as uncompromising is further reflected in the fact that being created in God's image brings divinity to each person. Ntozake Shange's poem for colored girls, who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enough,

²³Baker-Fletcher and Baker-Fletcher, My Sister, My Brother, 27.

²⁴ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 26.

captures this saying in the phrase "I found God in myself and I loved her fiercely."²⁵ Once we find God in ourselves, we begin to understand what Howard Thurman means when he claims that status of imago dei has no superior.

Cannon further indicates, "Any discussion of Thurman's ethics must begin with an understanding of God's grace which comes to humanity, exposing the individual to God, so that each person can believe in her divine status."²⁶ What then is God's grace? How does God's grace come to humanity? Albert Outler in John Wesley writes, "The Christian life, in Wesley's view, is empowered by the energy of grace; prevenient, saving, sanctifying, sacramental. Grace is always interpreted as something more than mere forensic pardon. Rather, it is experienced as actual influence-God's love, immanent and active in human life."²⁷

It is through the personhood of Jesus Christ that God has revealed God self to humanity. Thurman states that "to some God and Jesus may appeal in a way other than to us; some may come to faith in God and to love, without a conscious attachment to Jesus. Both Nature and good men besides Jesus may lead us to God. They who seek God with all their

²⁵ Ntozake Shange, for colored girls who have considered suicide, when the rainbow is enuf (New York: MacMillan, 1977), 63.

²⁶ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 161.

²⁷ Albert Outler, John Wesley: A Representative Collection of His Writings. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 33.

hearts must, however, some day on their way meet Jesus."²⁸ In Jesus and The Disinherited Thurman presents Jesus as a poor Jew, and part of the minority class. He further elaborates that the majority of the people of the world are poor and marginalized and can relate to Jesus.

Cannon believes that "being created in the image of God means, for Thurman that within each individual there is the presence and power of the divine. Only in the concreteness of God's revealed love does each person recognize her worth, purpose, and power. A part of every human spirit is the strivings and yearnings to come to itself in its Creator. When the soul feels God's presence, individuals are grasped by the divine essence, which heightens awareness of options and possibilities. This built-in sense of the Creator provides oppressed people with ultimate meaning and the ability to transform circumstances."²⁹ I believe that this summarizes Thurman's understanding of his participation in the Christian experience that one has the Creator as part of her being and therefore part of the divine dwells within.

"Howard Thurman's ethics begins with the divine creative process, wherein the potentiality in every person is aroused, which, in turn, inspires decisive liberating transformation. No matter how restricted moral agents

²⁸ Howard Thurman, Jesus and the Disinherited. (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1981), 11.

²⁹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 160.

might be, the experiential-mystical element of religion calls on each person to act and to reflect the divine in her actions."³⁰

This issue is further elaborated on in the writings of Baker-Fletcher when she notes, "Womanist theologians have described God as a God of liberation, a God of survival, and a God of resistance against evil."³¹ She further states that "there is a tendency to image God as empowering, sustaining, life-giving, strengthening, delivering bodies and souls from the miry pits of death whether such death is imposed from outside by oppressive forces or from within by self-destructive, suicidal tendencies."³² Womanist theology in ministering to the body, mind, spirit and the material world is not fragmented but holistic.

Thurman's most characteristic way of describing moral agency is seen in his description of oppression.³³ When oppressed people experience God, when they experience the essence of what it means to be created in God's image, their spiritual quest for wholeness begins. Those who best know the suffering of injustice and the urgency of freedom must be transformed so that they "can act to shock the oppressor into a state of upheaval and insecurity," God addresses the deepest needs and aspirations of the human spirit, so that those who are oppressed and disinherited can act with ingenuity and dexterity against

³⁰ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 160.

³¹ Baker-Fletcher and Baker-Fletcher, 29.

³² Baker-Fletcher and Baker-Fletcher, 29.

³³ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 161.

the judgments of the powerful and the denigration of the environment. Black women who have experienced enslavement, segregation and discrimination must know that their oppression does not originate with a defeat in their personhood but is part of the spiritual ruthlessness in a white, male-oriented society. For Thurman, the awareness of potential is the greatest source of hope and a committed spiritual life is necessary for an accurate sense of moral agency."³⁴

Thurman saw Jesus as a poor person and recognized that the majority of the people of the world are poor. These poor people can easily relate with Jesus. "Despite limiting conditions, Thurman believed that each person can experience integrity and hope through encounters with eternal possibilities. This understanding of ethics is Thurman's attempt to embrace the religious experience as a source of power. The consciousness that comes with mystical experience enables individuals to be aware of the humanity of others, even if the external circumstances do not support such."³⁵

Kirk-Duggan in her book, Exorcizing Evil illustrates how the spirituals were used to exorcise evil. In addition, more particularly "exorcized and negated the evil powers of slavery and racism."³⁶ She believed that the spirituals provided affirmations for the "African American personhood,

³⁴ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 161.

³⁵ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 161.

³⁶ Kirk-Duggan, 16.

freedom and God with them.”³⁷ Kirk-Duggan indicates that “as the persons singing this song affirm their beingness, their own importance, without ever using words of self-esteem or personal pride and without and talking about the revolutionary power one light amid vast darkness.”³⁸ The spirituals such as provide – “We Shall Overcome,” “This Little Light of Mine,” “Go Tell It On the Mountain,” “I’ve Been In the Storm,” “Sing ‘Til The Power of the Lord Comes Down,” “I’ve been buked” – provide an awareness of potential for the persons who are singing.

Katie’s Cannon also drew on the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., who believed that every human life is a reflection of divinity. King recognized that a human being was more than a biological being with a physical body. He believed that an individual is created as a being of spirit with the ability to reason which separates humanity from the other creatures. King drew on the biblical writers in developing his understanding of a human being as one who is created in the image of God. From this perspective, human beings are created with a rational capacity and also the unique ability to have fellowship with God. For King, humankind is in nature, and yet humankind is above nature; the human being is in time, and yet above time; in space, and yet above space. He believed that “every person is heir to a legacy of dignity and worth,

³⁷ Kirk-Duggan, 16.

³⁸ Kirk-Duggan, 60.

having rights that are neither conferred by nor derived from the state, they are God-given.”³⁹

Cannon recognizes that King uses the notion of the *imago dei* as the starting point for his theological ethics. Such thinking is reflected in King's assertion: “If Christians believe that God created all people in God's own image and that each person has equal value and worth, then the deliberate injury of another person is morally unjustifiable.”⁴⁰ King's theological ethics are “based on a sense of social responsibility that deals with the inherent value of each human being. King believed that humans are born with knowledge of what we are to do and not to do.”⁴¹ This is because human beings are beings of spirit. From this premise, King is able to argue that human beings are free beings who are made in the image of God. However, human beings must come to the realization that we have misused our freedom. In other words, some of the image of God is gone. From this perspective, therefore, the individual stands as a sinner in need of God's divine grace. Cannon draws on King's writings to show that the *imago dei* motif gives Black women the divine right to be treated as ends and never as mere means.⁴²

³⁹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 163.

⁴⁰ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 163.

⁴¹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 163.

⁴² Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 163.

Love

Moving from the image of God to the issue of love, "Thurman argued that only love of self, love between individuals and love of God can shape, empower and sustain social change."⁴³ Thurman believed in the interrelatedness and interdependence between each individual as a love-ethic. Jesus started his ministry with a love ethic that placed the love of God with all that composed a person (heart, mind, body, soul and might) and secondly, the love of one's neighbor as one loves herself. Jesus' ministry included loving those within and outside his immediate circle of friends and neighbors. Despite the social-political setting however he engaged with Samaritans (including the woman at the well), the Syrophoenician woman, and lepers. Jesus clashed with the class, race, and cultural conditions of his time but still he proceeded with the work of God recognizing the love-ethic combined with imago dei.

Thurman illustrates that Jesus used a love-ethic to deal with the Samaritans and in his encounter with the Syrophoenician woman. In addition, Thurman points out how Jesus had to apply his love-ethic to the enemy namely the Roman, the ruler. This was the hardest task, because to tangle with the enemy was to court disaster since to hate him in any way that caused action would invite the wrath of Rome and to love him

⁴³ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 164.

was to be regarded as a traitor to Jesus' own people, to Israel and therefore to God.

Thurman believed that there were three types of enemies that required three specific ways to be handled. The first enemy was a "personal enemy."⁴⁴ A personal enemy is someone close to you, within your intimate circle. This type of enemy was once a personal intimate friend. Thurman believed to love this type of personal enemy required "reconciliation". He reports that this is what Jesus meant when he said "If they bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembers that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt 5:23).

The second type of enemy are those that "by their activities, make it difficult for the group to live without shame and humiliation."⁴⁵ Thurman likens this type of enemy to those of tax collectors during Jesus time. Once Jesus became a friend with this type of enemy, it shed new light onto the love-ethic. This type of love "does not mean condoning ruthless behavior but recognizing with respect and reverence the imago dei in every personality."⁴⁶

Rome exemplified the third type of enemy discussed by Thurman. This type of enemy involved political, personal, impersonal and religious

⁴⁴ Thurman, 91.

⁴⁵ Thurman, 93.

⁴⁶ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 169.

aspects. Thurman believed that this type of love-ethic had to be a "common sharing of mutual worth and value in the wider human community."⁴⁷ Thurman believed that "hate, fear and deception are contradistinctions to life." He believed that they cut at the core of persons being and provided opportunities to perceive people incorrectly and attack their very being. He believed that these hate, fear and deception would cause people to be treated in inhuman ways. Thurman believed that love was the unity for life. He believed that "love transforms all people, places and things."⁴⁸ Cannon states that love provides the Black woman "with confidence to be bold and defiant, to risk all and stand by the truth, no matter what the cost."⁴⁹

Love was an important dimension in the ethics of both Thurman and King. King believed that all things are interrelated and love serves as the "binding force."⁵⁰ King elaborates on the nature of agape love. Agape love for King referred to nothing sentimental or basically affectionate; it means understanding, redeeming good will for all men and women, an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in and through the lives of men and women. When we love on the agape level, we love others not because we like them, not because their attitudes and ways appeal to us, but because God loves them. Here

⁴⁷ Thurman, 95.

⁴⁸ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 165.

⁴⁹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 165.

⁵⁰ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 165.

we rise to the position of loving the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed he or she does. King believed that "God in Christ is the paradigm of agape love" this is in contrast to Reinhold Niebuhr who argues that love may become the screen that hides injustices.⁵¹

The Scriptures invite us to "love one another, because love is from God everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love" (1 John 4:7-8). The connection between knowing that one is created in the image of God and that God is love further one understands that our very nature is love. It is through the love of one another as created in the image of God that a community emerges.

Community

Thurman and King in talking about imago dei and love move towards community. Life is centered on God according to Thurman. All creation is interrelated and from this point, a community emerges. Cannon comments, "Each woman is then called to move toward the common ground of relatedness, in order to translate the formulation of God's love into the actual phenomena of her human existence.

The ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr., more so than Howard Thurman focuses on an "inclusive human community" which he calls the "Beloved

⁵¹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 166.

Community”⁵² All of King's elementary concerns were directly related to the priority he assigned to the Beloved Community. This notion arose even as King was involved in Civil Rights activities that involved violence to himself and others around him. One of his earliest public roles as a leader came in 1961 and his involvement in the Montgomery bus boycott. Yet in this context, King indicated that the purpose was reconciliation and the end is redemption. The end that he envisioned was the creation of the beloved community. Although King spoke of “brotherhood,” his reference was the larger family of all humankind. For him, the beloved community was all of God's children, black or white, Jew or Gentile, male or female. King adopted nonviolence as the means to achieve the Beloved Community.

Cannon understands that Black women will have to continue to work towards the goal of King's vision of a beloved community. She claims that Black women are responsible, along with others who care, for collecting the facts to determine whether injustice exists. They must determine whether a law, an historical situation, or existing social relations elevate or debase humanity. This critical eye is seen in the work of Hurston who felt that dignity is a birthright, and a non-negotiable need. For Cannon, Hurston lived out the theological vision that Thurman and King spoke about to the best of her ability despite the fact that gender

⁵² Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 169.

discrimination racism and classism were oppressive forces that she had to endure. Thurman and King did not address gender discrimination and it has continued to be a neglected subject in some conversations in the African American community as well as the church.

Constructing an Ethic for the Practice of Ministry

In looking at the various writings of Womanist Theologians, Katie Cannon's illustrations of Zora Neal Hurston's work and the works of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr., I am able to construct an ethic for ministry that focuses on high self-esteem, empowerment and freedom. The concept of *imago dei* therefore is most appropriate because it begins with seeing every person as a reflection of God.

In looking at our communities, we see our neighbors who are God's creation and created in God's own image. Each person is the way God has created him/her physically, mentally, and spiritually. Jesus words "when you did this to the least of them you did it unto me" is a constant reminder to the church Jesus Christ is part of all persons and in acknowledging the persons presence where they are we acknowledging the Christ in them. In acknowledging the Christ, we acknowledge God. We are able to acknowledge God and the "Word was with God" and "the Word became flesh" (John 1:1, 14). In our understanding of *imago dei*, we accept people as having the Spirit of God within them whether

they are African American, Euro American, Korean, Chinese, Native American, Romanian, or Cuban.

In recognizing the imago dei, we recognize the divine within each person. In my understanding of Dr. Vine Deloria, Jr., in *For This Land*⁵³ I get the impression that this is what he was saying the missionaries failed to realize. The missionaries came not only to Native Americans but also to many other so-called third world countries denying the divine that already existed within the people and their culture. Dr. Deloria just like Howard Thurman takes up the Christianity reflected in the life of Jesus Christ to the poor, to the minority, to the outcast, to the marginal. It is through my acceptance of Christ that I am able to experience a person as being created in the image of God.

It is through accepting the fact that I am created just like others in the image of God and knowing God through Christ, I can truly love. I accept that God is love. In knowing that God is love, then that love dwells within each person because we are created in the image of God, which is love. Love then becomes the manner in which we act. It is through love that we are drawn together to share in the commonality of goodness, wholeness and good will. I am able to love the person without reservation, without conditions and in spite of racism, sexism, and classism. I can love the person for just being a creation of God.

⁵³ Vine Deloria, *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

In accepting the person as a creation of God, recognizing the divine within the person, it draws on my desire to love them. If I believe, "God is love," if I believe part of God dwells in God's creation then I recognize that love dwells within everyone. It is through the revelation of God's love for us in Christ do I come to understand this love. I am only able to love because I recognize that "because God so loved the world that God sent God's only Son, Jesus Christ, that whoever believes in Christ should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16). Once I realize the love that God has for me and the power of that love within then and only then can I see the love within the other person with a clear acceptance of that person, not to be confused with their behavior.

It is out of an understanding of love that I am able to answer one of the questions posed by Emilie Townes. Her first question was (1) can we be people of faith in the midst of diversity?⁵⁴ The answer from my perspective is yes! The answer is yes because it is through our diversity that we come to know God all of God's fullness. It is clear from the American theory of "melting pot" that diversity is a reality. Diversity reminds us of God's creative power, genius, and humor to some extent.

It is through this love that we come to know the divine within each person and once we have connected to one another through the love, we become the community. Womanist theologians remind us that it has

⁵⁴ Townes, 141

been the African American woman for decades that held the African American community and church together. We have a great cloud of witnesses among us with: Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Maxine Waters, Marian Wright Edelman, Bishop Leontine T. Kelly, and Dr. Joycelyn Elders just to name a few. It has been the African American woman that has taught her community how to take a little and make do. It has been the African American woman who has nurtured the community into years of survival when nothing was given to us. The Community, from which I emerge, and the one which I am part of, is one of love. It is in this love, through this love that I am called to engage in and with the community.

I have been reminded in the writings of the womanist theologians that I can unapologetically celebrate being an African American woman. From the perspective, every African American woman can freely enjoy and appreciate her loving self, life, food, and physical roundness over against the cruelty, destruction, exploitation, dehumanization and violence perpetuated by an idolatry of Whiteness. I am reminded that part of my ethics need to involve "thinking before I act". These perspectives are important for people of color as each person in our churches face the future with certainty living out the image of God, with the love of God, creating a community of God's people.

As we live out the image of God, with the love of God, creating a community of God's people, we must come to some understanding of what type of ministries are needed and what are the means to execute the ministries. One of the obstacles that the church may face is one of financing. The next chapter will explore options to finance ministry.

CHAPTER 3

Exploring Options for Financing Outreach Ministry

Introduction

This project began with the observation that in the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church many churches whose leaders are Ebony Prophets face major challenges in their outreach ministries. This often includes a lack of financial stability leading to the inability to provide and sustain adequate ministries to meet the needs of the community in which these churches are located.

Many of these congregations have experienced or are currently dealing with transitions. For example, some Black congregations have emerged in the context of “white flight” from urban areas. They have also seen other demographic changes which include the exodus of middle class African Americans, and the influx of other immigrant groups. Within this context, Black congregations are attempting to live out their commitments to personal transformation, social witness and engagement, and to justice and community uplift. This means that churches will attempt to respond to the political, economic, and social needs of the community, and to become the presence and body of Christ at work in the world.

Personal Reflection

My earliest recollection of church finance, Christian giving was as a third grade child attending Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in Lynwood, California. Prior to the church bus picking me up for Church school my mother would provide me with two dollars, one dollar was for Sunday school and the other dollar I could spend on the way home from Sunday school. That is my earliest recollection of Christian giving. This experience taught me that giving was a spiritual discipline and that I could be faithful in my Christian life through my giving. It also allowed me to recognize that the work of the church depended on the financial gifts of the congregation.

This challenge to faithful giving was often reflected in the bulletin, and in the teaching and preaching of the church. I can recall, that over the years as I continued to grow up in the church I would hear sermons preached on the topic of tithing and using the text of Malachi 3:10, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (KJV). Now, as a pastor I find myself practicing the spiritual discipline of "tithing and offering" as the Hebrew text, New Testament and the early Christian communities did before me. As a follower of the "Methodist Way", I also recognize John

Wesley's teaching to "earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can."¹

Traditional Means of Financing

In reviewing, the literature one understands that the tithe did not start with the Israelites but dates back to ancient communities. Salstrand states that the "tithe" an Anglo-Saxon term is "the tenth."² Natalini further explains, "the word "tithe" in its broad and generic meaning, signifies the tenth part of a harvest or income collected for specific religious motives or for the purposes of public financing." ³ Joiner indicates that the Babylonians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, Hebrews and Early Christians gave 10 percent. The Israelites refined the concept and clarified its spiritual importance for God's people. By the time of the New Testament, it is clear that the tithe is a minimum of giving. The tithe becomes symbolic of a partnership with God.⁴

Given the financial status of individuals and African Americans congregations within the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, are tithes and offerings enough to finance the ministry of the 21st century church? Churches typically finance themselves

¹ John Wesley, "The Use of Money," in John Wesley's Forty Four Sermons (London: Epworth Press, 1980), 576 –88.

² George A.E. Salstrand, The Tithe (Grand Rapid: Baker Book House, 1952), 15.

³ Terzo Natalini, A Historical Essay on Tithes, 3.

⁴ Donald W. Joiner, Creating a Climate for Giving (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2001), 38.

in a variety of ways. Lyle E. Schaller reports the following 22 ways that churches finance themselves: offering plate, bequests, memorials, one time large gifts encouraged by the tax code, user fees, income from investments, government grants for social services, appeals, rental income (building/parking lot), money-raising (i.e. bake sales), grants from corporations, capital fund appeal, big appeal, own foundation grants, denominational subsidies, sale of property, conference net income, grants from community or private foundation, long time member request, snowbirds, constituents, and giving circles.⁵

In the five churches with which I have been associated: St. John's UMC, First UMC (Compton), Crenshaw UMC, Calvary UMC and Hollypark UMC, there have been a significant amount of funds generated from some of the following: offering plate, user fees, income from investments, appeals, rental income, money-raising, capital fund appeal, big appeal, denominational subsidies, long time member request, constituents, and giving circles.⁶ In the traditional Black Church fundraising centers on special events related to Men's Day, Women's Day, Usher's Day and Church Anniversary. At Hollypark United Methodist Church (Gardena, California), we charge user fees related to the sale of clothes. This is where a company provides us a percentage of their sales and/or we charge an entrance fee. This is a cost-effective way to raise money – with

⁵ Joiner, 37.

⁶ ~~Lyle E.~~ Schaller, 44 Ways To Expand the Financial Base of Your Congregation, 49-163.

little overhead and labor. However, in reviewing Schaller's list it is clear that the same churches have several untapped financial resources including: bequests, memorials, one time large tax gift, government grants for social service, grants from corporations, own foundation grants, grants from community and private foundation. As the Church moves forward into the 21st Century, it is critical that the church recognizes that church finances are one important way to carry on the ministry and mission of the church. However, finances are not the only pillar for supporting mission. I agree with Durrall that the "church will never have all the money they need to begin new ministry . . . the church has to step out on faith."⁷

I would make the argument that as church people we tend to focus on the financial resources related to the execution of ministry rather than looking at the assets that are collectively gathered at the particular ministry site. Schaller has pointed to non-traditional financing such as foundation grants, cooperation grants and governmental grants as additional ways to meet the needs of the community.

Non-Traditional Means of Financing

The ideal of applying for governmental grants may raise issues of "church and state," but in the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, there is a

⁷ Michael Durrall, Beyond Collection Plate (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 95.

clause called "charitable choice." Charitable choice allows all service providers to apply for governmental grants, even religious groups. Charitable choice gives churches the opportunity to apply for and receive grants and funds to meet the identified needs of the community. The Faith-Based Community Economic Development Bulletin #1 responds to the question, "What is "charitable choice"?"

Charitable Choice" is a provision in the federal welfare reform act of 1996 that prohibits a state from discriminating against religious organizations in letting grants or contracts to providers of various welfare to work services, IF the state contracts with private providers. Eligible services are those that help persons becomes self-supporting, including job readiness training, educational programs (GED, ESL), and various life skill development programs. Charitable choice covers contracts and voucher programs utilizing federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplementary Security Income (SSI), food stamps and Medicaid. *No person can be required to receive services from a religious provider.*⁸

The law further states that "neither the Federal Government nor a State shall require a religious organization to (a) alter its form of internal governance; or (b) remove religious art, icons, scripture, or other symbols; in order to be eligible to contract to provide assistance, to accept certificates, vouchers, or other forms of disbursement ."⁹

Charitable choice tries to be intentional in allowing churches and other religious organization to have access to and use of public funds. In 1992, after the Rodney King verdict and the uprising there were a number of agencies particularly the federal government and local city government

⁸ National Congress, 1-4.

⁹ National Congress, 1-4.

that poured money into the greater Los Angeles area to rebuild not only property but also people. Churches that had a community development corporation (CDC)¹⁰ were able to participate and utilize these funds. Some churches established a CDC to make it clear that their mission is to serve the interest of the community. Normally, the CDC has more community representation than a church typically does.

Charitable choice became a way for religious organizations to petition the government for funds to meet a specific need. Charitable choice becomes a tool, a resource to develop the assets of the community. It will enhance the church's outreach ministry and provide an intersection of church and state. We must understand that traditionally, the church would not seek outside sources.

Some denominations such as the United Methodist Church have the additional blessings of being part of a connectional system. We are able to solicit grants for particular local causes from our connection/conference/denomination. I have worked or partnered with several churches and/or programs that have solicited and been awarded a number of grants over the years from the California-Pacific Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

There are also agencies related to the United Methodist Church that provide grants. For example, there is the Los Angeles United

¹⁰ "Community Development is a process through which resident and other community stakeholders engage in social, economic, housing and other asset development." National Congress, 1.

Methodist Urban Foundation (LAUMUF). The LAUMUF came into existence after the sale of First UMC, Los Angeles at which time they established a foundation to help with urban ministry. There is the United Methodist Foundation of the California-Pacific Annual Conference. Each district within the California-Pacific Annual Conference receives funds to distribute to specific ministries within their district. For example, the Wesley Food Bank receives funds from the district for food. The Long Beach District is taking this a step further in the development of the Living into the Future Foundation.

Having served as a local pastor, pastor-in-charge, or sole pastor I recognize that time is critical in building upon the assets of the congregation as related to finance. It is important for me to teach the traditions of the church which related to giving as a spiritual discipline. The tithe and offering became a thanksgiving offering and an organized way to finance the ministries of the church not out of obligation but out of partnership.

Tithes and offerings will take us so far, and I believe that additional funding sources will take us closer to being community. It will help us live out of our desire to food, shelter, clothe and help persons achieve a quality of life. There is the argument within the church that you only budget based on pledges and commitments. Churches may need additional ways to raise funds in order to serve the already disadvantages

communities in which they are located. It is clear there are assets within the community but not enough to fulfill its mission. Therefore, it becomes critical that additional funding sources are sought to enhance the standard of living so that individuals may succeed emotionally, socially, financially and spiritually.

The Church's Response to Charitable Choice

The church can view the Charitable Choice provisions afforded within the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 as an opportunity to expand its work and outreach. It is no secret that the average North American citizen would tell you that there is a separation of church and state. It is in the separation of church and state that we find the opportunity for the church and state to collaborate in relationship of working with the poor and less fortunate. Howard Thurman discusses the historical fact that Jesus was a poor Jew. It is following the teachings of Jesus that the church can recognize its' ministry to the poor, less fortunate and marginalized. Charitable Choice provides the financial means for the church and state to intersect in building a greater America. It is in building a greater America that we embody the great commandment to "love thy neighbor as thy self."

John Ashcroft, United States Senator writes "one of my goals in proposing the charitable choice provision was to encourage faith-based

organizations to expand their involvement in the welfare reform effort by providing assurances that their religious integrity would be protected.”¹¹ Ashcroft’s statement directs the conversation towards the vital need for finding common ground to enable church and state to work collaboratively on quality of life issues. He anticipates the objections of those who are concerned about religious liberty and issues around the separation of church and state. Ashcroft notes that “the provision protects the rights of faith-based providers as well as the religious liberty of the individuals they may serve.”¹²

There are people at each station of the argument for and against the church and state engaging in collaborative efforts. The church may examine this law and seek to determine the ways in which it provides a window of opportunity, if the church chooses to participate. The church must educate itself to the charitable choice provisions and make an informed decision to participate or not.

The first issue that the church has to consider is whether the church can benefit from charitable choice. It is my belief that many faith communities can benefit from charitable choice. The church, particularly the Black Church has historically been a place for the empowerment of people. Charitable choice provides financial resources to further this

¹¹ A Guide to Charitable Choice: A Letter from Senator John Ashcroft, accessed March 26, 2007; available from <http://www.cpjustice.org>.

¹² Ibid.

traditional mission of the church. Charitable Choice is focused on specific funding mandates related to issues of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, Community Services Block Grant and substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant and projects for assistance in transition from homelessness. These programs administered through Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration meet needs and address problems that are at the core of the churches desire to provide persons with a quality of life.

It is safe to state that the majority of persons that are living on the margins of our communities are faced with issues of: food, housing, mental health, substance abuse and employability. These provisions of charitable choice identify the critical issues facing many communities and it is in the interest of the church to identify and strengthen outreach ministry opportunities to those whom we serve.

As the church considers the benefits of participating in charitable choice it has to determine its options. The church may create a separate entity (corporation) to address the requirements as outlined by participation. The church has the option to create a separate 501(c)(3) but it is not necessary. The law does require that "all government funds must be used to fulfill the public social service goals, and no direct government

funding can be diverted to inherently religious activities such as worship, sectarian instruction, and proselytization"¹³

The Center for Public Justice indicates, "Separate incorporation may facilitate control of the use of federal funds and shield the main organization from some federal employment laws. Separate incorporation will also shield the main organization from fiscal audits of the use of the federal funds."¹⁴ The leadership must decide whether there are financial resources within the current church structure to meet this requirement. It may be easier to separate out the resources for outreach ministry compared to those of worship, sectarian instruction and proselytization. The church may consider the option of separate accounting systems compared to a completely new 501©3.

Once the church engages in using public funds to finance these ministries one must consider the challenges of accessing the funds. Charitable Choice is administrated through the laws of the federal government but it is distributed mostly through the state. Therefore, the ability to access these public funds for the average church leadership may present a challenge. Churches may need to educate those involved about the use of public funds in order to develop a frame of reference that is beyond the scope of worship, sectarian instruction, and

¹³ U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, What Is Charitable Choice?, ~~online~~, available from www.hhs.gov/fbc/choice.html.

¹⁴ Center for Public Justice, A Guide to Charitable Choice; accessed March 20, 2007; available from <http://www.cpjustice.org>.

proselytization. Many of the church members may have skill sets in their professional occupation but may need the opportunity to utilize those skills with the church context.

One of the challenges is to have the necessary documentation that the church is an appropriate legal entity within the state.¹⁵ These documentations would also include paperwork from the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) of your status and taxpayer identification number. In applying with the Federal Government, it is also important to obtain a DUNS number.¹⁶ These are just a few obstacles in accessing public funds. In addition, one of the issues in accessing public funds knows the window of opportunity for submission of grants. The church would need to get on the mailing list of several entities in knowing when grants are available for submission – request for proposals (RFP).

In listing the church on the mailing list, email or subscription service for notification of request for proposals, the church must be aware of the time and limitations of the funds being sought. Once the church applies and receives funds, it must be clear, and held before the leadership that the money can only be used for what it was requested. The church cannot co-mingle funds or borrow federal funds. It has to utilize funds with fiscal integrity and be alert to audit responsibility. Therefore, the church

¹⁵This is referring to the corporation status as administrated through the Secretary of State.

¹⁶ D&B® D-U-N-S® Number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 100 million businesses worldwide. Churches attempting to obtain a DUNS number should contact www.dnb.com.

must consider financial stability as its primary task before seeking the use of public funds in funding its outreach ministry. It is in the financial security of meeting the primary task, worship, sectarian instruction and proselytization, that a church can diversify its financial portfolio to include public funds.

The use of public funds implies that the public is providing the funds and it is assumed that the public has the right and responsibility to know how the money is used. Therefore, the need for regular reports which are public, and the ability for the program (outreach ministry) to be evaluated for its effectiveness through outside criteria. One must also be aware that the "religious organization shall not discriminate against an individual on the basis of religion, a religious belief, or refusal to actively participate in a religious practice. If an individual objects to the religious character of a program, a secular alternative must be provided."¹⁷ The church must know the services that it provides as well as those comparable services that are available in the broader community.

The church that seeks after public funds must consider the strength of its current financial resources. It is said that to start a business you need at least six months capital. The "average" church operates on a week-to-week mentality and from this perspective the church has to face the challenges of incorporating programs that may include the use of

¹⁷ www.hhs.gov/fbc/choice.html .1

vouchers and fee-for-service reimbursement.¹⁸ The church has to have the ability to provide the services despite delays in the receipt of payment.¹⁹ The church must also consider the resources necessary to complete the application process. This may include obtaining the services of a grant writer. Can the church afford a grant writer or does the church have the resources to complete the grant application itself?

The church must further consider its willingness to work with the poor and less fortunate. Given that the majority of African-American United Methodist Churches are middle-class affluent persons there is a need to recognize that everyone is not willing or able to work with the poor and less fortunate. Not everyone can deal with the issues associated with mental illness, homelessness, substance abuse and welfare. This is not to say that these church members do not know or associate with individuals with these conditions but to provide a ministry where collectively they are together may raise a new set of concerns for consideration among church people.

Those against the use of public funds within the church community would argue that in taking public funds there are strings attached. Many feel that taking public funds may influence the church's ability to provide sectarian instruction and proselytization. For some communities of faith

¹⁸ Fee-for-service is a system that reimburses the provider after acceptable services have been provided.

¹⁹ Many churches that struggle financially are able to press on through difficult financial situations with the assurance that things may not happen when you want them to but God's action is always on time. This is the central message of a familiar spiritual: *"You Can't Hurry God."*

everything that is done is organized with the goal of proselytization. In the distribution of food, it is a "proselytization" moment and the church's inability to distribute religious materials or make conditions on the participant may affect the church's mission.

The church's ability to meet the needs of the clients as dictated by the availability of funds may cause concern. The use of public funds and the funds availability may limit the availability of services, number of clients served and location of the services. It is believed that "each organization must make its own judgment about the risks and benefits of cooperating with government in the programs subject to Charitable Choice.

Charitable Choice is designed to eliminate or minimize existing pressures to secularize by providing a range of legal and practical protections for the religious character and autonomy of organizations that choose to take part."²⁰ The Guide continues with the fact that "charitable choice only expands the opportunity for such organizations to provide welfare services with government funding, while protecting their integrity and autonomy if they choose to do so. Each organization will have to make its own judgment about how to protect itself from a

²⁰ Center for Public Justice. Guide to Charitable Choice, 9.

destructive dependency on government funding (or any other source of income)."²¹

The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives is the child of Charitable Choice. Upon the election of President George W. Bush, the child of charitable choice was formed,

As one of the first acts of his Presidency, President Bush established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. He has created Centers for the Initiative in seven Federal agencies: The Department of Justice, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Education and the Agency for International Development. The White House Office and the Agency Centers are charged with ensuring the local faith-based and community groups have a fair chance to compete for Federal dollars without facing barriers.²²

Conclusion

In summary, it is critical to the 21st Century Church that a local church uses all the financing options available to meet the needs of not only the local congregation but the growing needs of communities. Recognizing that there may be 22 ways to finance ministry, a local congregation may want to consider the most cost-effective means to access the highest amount of funding and to develop a diversity of funding sources. Charitable Choice provides one way that a faith-based organization can apply for public funds regarding a particular service

²¹Guide to Charitable Choice. 9

²² See the Grant Opportunities link, "Federal Funds for Organizations That Help Those In Need (Grants Catalog)" and The White House website, available from www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbc/grant-opportunities.html.

they are providing. However, it does take time, talent and knowledge to seek out these funds and sound management as well as accountability.

It is clear that despite the fact that the Charitable Choice is an acceptable means to fund ministry with the poor and less fortunate there are serious concerns that the church, a faith-based organization must consider. It is in the consideration for public funds that the church must conduct its own cost-analysis, and determine its own spiritual, financial, ethical, moral, legal and ecclesial concerns. The church must consider Charitable Choice as one means to accomplish the task of funding outreach ministries. It is in the evaluation that the church can begin to weigh the challenges, possibilities and opportunities.

CHAPTER 4

Ministries beyond the Stained Glass Window

Introduction

Churches that are located in communities that struggle with quality of life issues are often challenged theologically to find ways to connect the worship of their congregations with the needs of the community. In some cases, the despair in these communities reaches a level that reflects their belief that the church is not relevant to their day to day lives. Yet the church has to embody a theology that speaks to the needs of the oppressed, the poor, and the less fortunate. Howard Thurman said it best:

The solution which Jesus found for himself and for Israel, as they faced the hostility of the Greco-Roman world, becomes the word and the work of redemption for all the cast-down people in every generation and in every age. I mean this quite literally. I do not ignore the theological and metaphysical interpretation of the Christian doctrine of salvation. However, the underprivileged everywhere have long since abandoned any hope that this type of salvation deals with the crucial issues by which their days are turned into despair without consolation. The basic fact is that Christianity as it was born in the mind of this Jewish teacher and thinker appears as a technique of survival for the oppressed.....Wherever his spirit appears, the oppressed gather fresh courage; for he announced the good news that fear, hypocrisy, and hatred, the three hounds of hell that track the trail of the disinherited, need have no dominion over them.¹

In the cases that follow, I shall examine how congregations have responded to their contexts and how in some cases the work of African American women is exemplified offering the presence of Jesus. These women have led with the hope that allows for the gathering of courage

¹ Thurman, 28-29

on the part of those who are poor and less fortunate. The women have in their own witness what Cannon described as Black women's sensibilities of invisible dignity, quiet grace, and un-shouted courage.

Case Studies

This project focuses on three outreach ministries centered in three communities in which black congregations are located. The case studies reveal some of the challenges that are encountered by many Ebony Prophets within the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. These case studies further demonstrate the difficulties that confront churches that have limited financial resources and are challenged by mission opportunities that require resources that are greater than the offering plate can sustain.

For these three case studies, research was limited to those ministries that were accessible and reflected a diversity of funding options, leadership arrangements, and host congregation involvement. Although these cases are not fully representative of all of the outreach ministries within the California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, or those engaged in by the churches that are led Ebony Prophets, However, they do provide helpful insights for all churches that are currently engaged in or desire to implement outreach ministries that

reflect the intersection of mission of the church and the needs of the community.

These case studies also provide a view towards dealing with the larger question of having churches become more aware of their options for diversifying their financial resources. The cases will also bring into view the ways of understanding the intersection between church and government partnerships since it pays attention to areas of public funding, urban ministry, and community development. It seeks to help churches to look beyond the tithes and offerings of the collection plate and directs attention to the ways in which the church can expand its financial base to include access to public funds.

In conducting these case studies, I used a variety of approaches. In the first case study, I drew upon personal experience and created a narrative to describe the sequence of events that gave rise to the program. I reflected upon the church's attempt to address a growing need that was brought to its attention. I also examined the role of key persons who were instrumental in making the program a reality.

In the second case study, I drew also upon my own knowledge of the district. I interviewed some of the key staff persons, and board members in an attempt to understand the outreach program. In addition to my own observations, I had access to the data from the records of the program from which I could learn about the operations of the program.

In the third case study, I also had personal knowledge of this program. In addition, I interviewed key personnel including volunteers, staff, pastor, and members of the board of directors. Overall, these case studies relied on data from these ministries that was derived from personal experience, interviews and public records. In these cases, I relied heavily on the findings that resulted from interviews with the three Ebony Prophets who were involved with these programs. In some cases, the individual was critical in the start-up, or ongoing ministry, or may have inherited the leadership of the ministry upon her arrival to that congregation.

The case studies provide insights into strengths and opportunities in addressing community needs within the structure of the selected churches. They are essentially local projects that have used a variety of funding sources to meet their goal in increasing the quality of living for the communities they seek to serve. I will look at the case studies from four specific areas: the Nature of the Program/Outreach/Ministry to the Community, host/sponsor church support, leadership, resources/funding.

Case One: New Beginnings/New Transitions

The first case study is New Beginnings/New Transitions, which was a particular program I was involved in from the beginning with Dr. Delores Alleyne. Dr. Alleyne is a retired Pediatrician, a member of Crenshaw

United Methodist Church, Los Angeles (CUMC), and a great saint of the church, not only at CUMC but also in the body of Christ universal. The Christian Education Committee, which Dr. Alleyne chaired and I staff, became aware of the increasing need to address delinquent youth particularly on probation.

We learned that children were placed on informal probation for among other things, physical altercations, poor problem solving skills and poor interpersonal relationships. The growing gang activity within the Baldwin Village was affecting the broader community including the neighborhoods surrounding Crenshaw UMC.² Dr. Alleyne and I became aware of the possibility for partnership with Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) through programs that provide services to youth who attended the Community Education Center (CEC) department of probation schools. The program would provide services after school to youth on probation to keep them off the street and to provide an alternative to gang activity.

Crenshaw United Methodist Church was awarded the contract and we were to provide services on fee-for-services basis to the youth going to Community Educational Center in our area, which included Inglewood, Crenshaw, and Lomita. We would bring youth to the CUMC campus

² This image of gang activity within the Baldwin Village is depicted in the motion picture, Training Day, Prod. Antoine Fuqua, ^{writer} Writ-David Ayer, ^p Perf. Denzel Washington, Ethan Hawke, Scott Glenn, Tom Berenger, Harris Yulin, and Raymond J. Barry. Warner Bros. Picture, 2001.

twice per week and provide after-school and/weekend services through a program called New Beginning/New Transitions.

Tutoring, computer lab, cultural enrichment, field trips, music appreciation, and snacks were the components that make up New Beginnings/New Transitions. This new weekday program was building on the successful weekend program that Dr. Alleyne and Clyde Davis had provided over the past five years. The weekend program called Saturday School involved children and youth from the Baldwin Village and surrounding communities (View Park, Baldwin Hill Estates, and Crenshaw District). It was on this program that the New Beginnings/New Transitions would launch itself as a weekday extension of Saturday school targeting youth on probation. We used the church bus to make our rounds to the various CECs in the area to transport the youth to our program.

Although building upon the Saturday school, the program New Beginnings/New Transitions did not have any capital so that was our first obstacle. In my conversations with the Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation (LAUMUF), I immediately realized that the church, other than what was already allocated to the Saturday school was not even involved with this project. The church began its involvement and investment by seeking a line of credit worth \$15,000 from the Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation (LAUMUF). Several weeks later, the board of directors for Los Angeles Urban Foundation approved the

request for a line of credit to Crenshaw United Methodist Church for \$15,000.00 to assist with the New Beginnings/New Transitions. We initially drew down a \$5,000.00 starting amount.

Additionally, Dr. Alleyne and I completed a grant request with United Methodist Ministries-Los Angeles District (UMM-LAD) for New Beginnings/New Transitions. The UMM-LAD provided us a grant out of their urban ministries funds for transportation related expenses – which was \$125.00 per month for 12 months. The program received a check each month. We further petitioned the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank (LARFB) to establish a Kids Club™ at the CUMC.

Once we had the necessary funds, we were able to seek out clients for the program from our service area Community Education Centers. Each site had a site coordinator who helped each student at the school find programs to complete their eight-hour day as required as part of their probation. Crenshaw's New Beginning/New Transition was able to get a few participations from the Inglewood/Centania/South Bay area for a short period. Those that came to the program soon realized that traveling across town (Inglewood to Baldwin Estates/Village) placed them too far from home. The participants attending Inglewood CEC actually lived in Compton, Inglewood, Hawthorne, Lomita, San Pedro or Lawndale. The program was unable to maintain itself with the few participants given the contract was a fee-for-service arrangement. The program eventually

folded. As Program Director, I was conscious of the \$15,000 line of credit and the remaining \$5,000 that CUMC owed Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation (LAUMUF). I was able to complete a \$5,000 grant request for LAUMUF once they started taking applications and we were successfully granted a \$5,000 grant to pay back the initial \$5,000 borrowed against the line of credit.

Analysis

In retrospect, New Beginnings/New Transitions made a great attempt to seek public funds to finance a needed service to youth at-risk, gang affiliated and on probation. It provided the funds on fee-for-service basis, which created some initial and on-going financial limitations. Our lack of knowledge relative to gang affiliation and youth crossing gang boundaries provided a potential risk, which initially was not taken into account. The failure of the leadership to include the official body of the church (Administrative Council, Trustees) in the approval of the program and providing financial resources spoke boldly to a critical issue in the success of the program as related to the overall ministry of the church. This was a great learning opportunity and provided experience in various areas that I have been able to take to my current ministry as pastor, Hollypark United Methodist Church (Gardena, California).

Theological Reflection

In this section, we will reflect on four thought provoking questions as examined in Chapter two of this project: (1) Can we be people of faith in the midst of diversity? (2) What are we teaching the people? (3) What are we doing for the spiritual health of people? (4) What are we saying to the people?

We can take these questions together and note that the program was established in the context of communities that are experiencing transitions. Some of these transitions emerge in terms of a changing demographic and the spirit of cooperation or hostility that develops between different groups of people based on ethnicity, access to political power, access to jobs and economic power, and to proper educational opportunities. It is in this context that ministries such as New Beginnings/New Transitions emerge to address the needs of communities that are marked by ever increasing diversity.

Ministries such as New Beginnings/New Transitions are able to teach by example. In this ministry we see the application of the "love-ethic." This is reflected in Howard Thurman's understanding of Jesus as the dispossessed or disinherited.³ Thurman's understanding is that Jesus became one with those who were marginalized. Thurman reminds us that

³ Thurman, 90

“Jesus had to deal with the Samaritans”⁴ and he draws attention as well to Jesus’ conversation with the Syrophoenician woman. In the case of New Beginnings/New Transitions the marginalized whom the program attempted to serve were young persons who were often from poor backgrounds, who were affiliated with gangs, and who were already a part of the legal and criminal establishment. The love-ethic was manifested in the programs attempt to reach out to the probationers and show them unconditional love.

Thurman indicated that love brings social change. Love is manifested in this ministry in the sharing of black (African American) and brown (Latino) sharing space and living among one another. The goal of the program was to help these youth to be empowered and to work together for the common good. This love is manifested in the sharing of resources, space and recreation. It is through the manifestation of love as shown by Dr. Alleyne that the community is able to mirror the experience.

Thirdly, this ministry manifested love and tried to cultivate love as a way of being. For many youth who see others as the enemy because of race, country of origin, neighborhood, language, or economic resources this was an experience in sharing space with some one who is different. Thurman is conscious that in communities there are persons whose activities are despicable and troubling to other members of society.

⁴ Thurman, 90

These persons "comprise those persons who by their activities make it difficult for the group to live without shame and humiliation."⁵ New Beginnings/New Transitions attempted to provide a safe space to persons who by their activities would be considered outcast by the mainstream society but relational to their "gang". As reflected in Thurman's understanding this population could be compared to the "tax collectors" of Jesus time. Thurman states, "To be seen in their company meant a complete loss of status and respect in the community."⁶ One could make the argument that it is in showing love to a gang member that one was demonstrating love for God.

The *imago dei* comes into focus as one reflects on the ability of the leadership to accept everyone as persons created in the very image of God. The faith community is led to accept everyone as a manifestation of God. When this takes place through the programs of the church the possibility emerges for the person to see for him or herself that image, and this revelation could bring about transformation. This was a critical element of the program as the majority of the participants had a religious affiliation but had not allowed there religious beliefs to control their behavior. This program demonstrated the ability to provide space and nurture within the Christian experience and created room for the *imago dei* to be manifest.

⁵ Thurman, 93.

⁶ Thurman, 93.

New Beginnings/New Transitions attempted to live out the core commitments of the Black Church tradition by being that place within the community that the poor and less fortunate, (including gang members) could gather and gain a greater awareness of their lives as they develop self-esteem, find empowerment and experience freedom. The program allowed Crenshaw United Methodist Church to continue the tradition of being a sanctuary for those seeking freedom from the life of crime. Within the Black Church tradition, the church has traditionally been viewed as the entity that empowers and brings about transformation.

Case Two: Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency

The second case is Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency. Zaferia is a section of Long Beach, California that was an outreach ministry of the former Wesley United Methodist Church. Shortly after the civil unrest in 1992, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church established the Shalom Zone Ministry. Shalom Zones were established throughout the United Methodist area and specifically in California-Pacific Annual Conference, there were four Shalom Zones established – North Hills, Pacoima, Los Angeles, and Long Beach. The Long Beach site was housed at the Wesley United Methodist Church where The Reverend Cherrye Cunningham was the pastor. Rev. Cunningham became the Executive Director of the religious 501©3 agencies know as the Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency.

Zaferia was able to secure grants from a variety of agencies including Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation, Urban Strategist of California Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and welfare to work program of the state of California. Zaferia was able to secure additional grants from the state relative to providing a back-to-work program, domestic violence education (Creating a Safe Environment), a food pantry and summer programs related to youth. Zaferia had several partners in their ministry including Interval House, a domestic violence shelter. It was actually Interval House who requested the partnership with the Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency for Creating a Safe Environment (CASE).

Zaferia was an organized non-profit 501©3 for specific social service ministries to the Zaferia community of Long Beach, California. A board of directors that included not only United Methodist but also others from the community governed it. In 2005, Wesley United Methodist Church was closed due to declining membership, an inability to maintain its personal financial, and ministry responsibilities. Zaferia, as a separate organized entity continued to operate and Creating A Safe Environment (CASE) which was one of the programs offered by Zaferia in partnership with Interval House, Domestic Violence relocated to the Dominquez United Methodist Church. Additionally, in March 2005 CASE funding cycle was completed. In June 2005, CASE mission and ministry were taken over by

the Interval House program entirely through independent funding sources. By September 2005, the only program left under the Zaferia umbrella was the food pantry and it had enough money to last for another few months.

The Long Beach District eventually assumed responsibilities for Zaferia given the lack of funds to further its mission within the Zaferia community. It was the vision of those involved in consultation with the Long Beach Grant Task force that the emerging Living into the Future Foundation of the Long Beach District assume responsibilities and expand upon the mission and ministry of Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency. In October 2005, the Board of Directors of Zaferia voted to change its name to Living into the Future Foundation and to expand its mission and ministry into the boundaries of the Long Beach District of the United Methodist Church. The address would change to the Long Beach District Office. At or near the same time the Long Beach District Grant Task Force received the requested seed money approximately \$700,000 from the Long Beach District Union to establish the Living into the Future Foundation.

Analysis

When one looks at the history of Zaferia Shalom Zone Agency as it is related to the former Wesley United Methodist Church, one can see how, despite the frailness of the congregation – a thriving social service agency emerged. As we reflect upon the transition of Zaferia Shalom Zone

Agency into the Living into the Future Foundation broadening its ministry base to the Long Beach District of the United Methodist Church, Zaferia has successfully operated time specific ministries within the community. Many women, children and young men were helped by the back-to-work program, summer youth program, feeding program and domestic violence outreach.

The transition of Zaferia into a larger geographic area provides a solid framework for the expansion of the mission and ministry to the Long Beach District. The Living into Our Future Foundation's revitalization of Zaferia into a ministry under the District builds on and affirms Zaferia's initial ministry and the contribution to the community. It also recognizes that the survival of an agency is based on the revenue it is able to generate in a timely manner. For example, a 501©3 has to be progressive with the funding sources and seek funds two to three years ahead otherwise the loss of staff and programs become critical.

Another key factor to the Zaferia program was the leadership. In this case, the church was the diversity was reflected in terms of an African American (Ebony Prophet) woman leading a Euro-American congregation that was decline. Zaferia was built from a frail worshipping congregation and despite their frailness in age and resources, this thriving ministry emerged. Rev. Cunningham's skills and resourcefulness through the Shalom Zone Ministry was critical to its success. In addition, the skills of

people that were drawn to the ministry became critical. One example is Rev. Mary Walton who holds a master of social work degree and has a long history of grant writing and networking with a variety of agencies. The successful and dedicated leadership of Rev. Cunnigan, Rev. Mary Walton, Rev. Arnetha Inge and Lonnie Blathers was a necessary dimension of a ministry that resonated with words taken from the book of Esther "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14, KJV).

As Zaferia unfolds into a larger ministry it is critical to recognize that leadership of the board of directors plays a key role. As the Board President, I have come to understand the importance of the composition, interest and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, as well as the importance of a clear mission, vision and strategic plan. Living into the Future consulted the Long Beach Non-Profit Partnership for board training and strategic planning in order to take seriously our role and strengthen our leadership.

Zaferia now moves to its second life as Living into Our Future Foundation – serving the communities of the Long Beach District of the United Methodist Church. It has seed money from the Long Beach District Union, appropriate \$700,000, and a 2006-07 operating budget of \$39,000. Its' primary goal is to provide new start/renovation ministries, clergy/laity education and multi-site congregation development and programming.

In review, it is clear that the weakness of a host/sponsor connection created an additional burden upon Zaferia, which included issues with staffing and board of directors' involvement, responsibility and leadership. It is important to develop ministry structures and resources that are not personality driven.

Theological Reflection

In this section, we will reflect on four thought provoking questions as examined in Chapter two of this project: (1) Can we be people of faith in the midst of diversity? (2) What are we teaching the people? (3) What are we doing for the spiritual health of people? (4) What are we saying to the people?

The community reflected a changing demographic that gave rise to a large group of persons that represented a more diverse and multi-ethnic community. The context of ministry here is one of a large working class community which was marked by the larger problems of substance abuse, homelessness, and domestic violence. In such a transitional community, many people moved in for recovery and then found more permanent residence after regaining some measure of stability in the physical and spiritual well-being. One might observe further that the issues of the spiritual health of the church were intertwined with the physical and mental well-being of the people whom the church was seeking to serve.

In such a context, the foundations of ministry of the faith community must be derived from some theological reflection. In the case of Zaferia, the foundation for mission was one of *imago dei*. It was in the context of a community of the poor and less fortunate that Rev. Cunnigan used her talents to bring forth a ministry of care, nurture, and compassion. In Womanist theology, this type of labor is often described with reference to the image of the "midwife."⁷ In other words, by helping persons within the broader community, the ministry of Zaferia helped to give birth to new meaning in their lives. The majority of persons who participated in the Zaferia program were women and children. Rev. Cunnigan provided a safe environment for them to grow into productive members of society. She nurtured the *imago dei* within each of the participants through educational moments, clothes closet and empowerment workshops. She was able to birth possibilities that empowered families. It was through the gathering of the physically broken (substance abuse) and mentally challenged that Rev. Cunnigan was able to speak words of encouragement and bring into self-awareness the very image of God.

The program also gave rise to the notion of the beloved community as taught by Martin Luther King, Jr. It was in the clients' self-awareness that a sense of the beloved community began to gather in this community called Zaferia. The beloved community manifested itself in

⁷ Miller-LcLemore, 151. Gill –Austern asserts that womanistst use the metaphor of midwife to bring about transformation.

the sharing of resources, the sharing of job opportunities and the sharing of affordable housing. The vision of a beloved community allowed for the design and implementation of programs that were able to move people from welfare-to-work. Even in terms of food distribution within the community, the ethics of a beloved community made it possible for the distribution of food to take place without a core of employees but through strong community participation. One can see that with the high level of turn over within the community how critical the role of the midwife was in providing a passage to a healthier and better quality of life.

Zaferia attempted to live out the core commitments of the Black Church tradition by being that place within the community where persons could find refuge, empowerment, and transformation. In this case, much of marginalization was brought about from the larger problems of substance abuse, homelessness, mental illness, and domestic violence. The program recognized the need to move beyond its worship to participate in ministries that respond to the social dimensions of community life. Through the program people could develop self-esteem, find empowerment, and wholeness. In this role, the church understood how its outreach arm could function in the community as a social service agency.

Wesley United Methodist Church chose to create a separate 501© 3 to further its ministry with the poor and less fortunate. It was by the 501©3

that the agency sought public funds to address particular needs of the community. The program was able to raise the self-esteem of the participants within the context of the Black Church Tradition and actually using the tradition of the church to empower and hold persons accountable. Despite the fact that Wesley UMC was not a Black Church, Rev. Cunnigan, an African American woman recognized the importance of the church being a place of spiritual transformation and otherwise.

Case Three: Rakestraw Memorial Community Educational Center

The third case study is Wesley United Rakestraw Memorial Community Educational Center commonly known as Rakestraw Memorial (RM). The Rakestraw Memorial is a non-profit 501©3 located in South Los Angeles and an outreach ministry of the Wesley United Methodist Church (Los Angeles, California), the oldest African American United Methodist Church west of the Mississippi river.

Prior to 1947, the Methodist Episcopal Church occupied the property known as Wesley Methodist Church. The Methodist Episcopal Church first operated a "community house directly across from the church.⁸ In the early 70's under the leadership of The Reverend Dr. Robert Smith Rakestraw was organized into a non-profit 501©3. Through the

⁸ It was under the leadership of the Reverend Dr. Cornish Rogers that Wesley United Methodist Church began a refurbishment work on the "community house" and named it after one of the former pastors, The Reverend Rakestraw.

years, Rakestraw Memorial has had its share of programs and ministries always strongly tied to the Wesley United Methodist Church. Rakestraw served as a “wet weather program” during the early 90's for a brief period, sheltering people from the cold winter nights. Once the wet weather program ended in 1995, Rakestraw Memorial became inactive. The facility was not being used mostly due to the needed repairs on the building and lack of programming.

In 1996, a group of concerned Wesley United Methodist Church members under the leadership of Mrs. Addie and Arlinda Clark, explored avenues to reactivate the ministry at Rakestraw Memorial Community Educational Center. The group gathered grants from a variety of sources including General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) for \$216,000, for the refurbishment of the building. They solicited the help and funds of the California Pacific Annual Conference Urban Strategist, Reverend James (Jim) Conn, United Methodist Ministries-Los Angeles District, Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation, federal government grants, private foundation grants including Parsons, Amateur Athletic Foundation, Weingarten, to name a few. They have an annual black and white tie fundraiser event to broaden their income base. The group recruited and established a viable Board of Directors including Clayton Hammond and Cornish Rogers, former pastors of Wesley United Methodist Church

In a phone conversation with The Reverend Clayton Hammond, he attributes the current success of the Rakestraw Memorial Community Educational Center to two key factors: (1) strong backing from the host/sponsoring church and (2) a working board of directors. As 2005, Rakestraw has a working board of directors, a host of volunteers (community and Wesley United Methodist Church) and several programs serving the community. The programs offered include after-school tutoring, homework help, piano lessons, volleyball, basketball and boxing.

Analysis

Having grown up in the Los Angeles District of the United Methodist Church I have become familiar with the various churches and the social programs that they offer. I have witnessed through the dedication of church members that enabled Rakestraw Memorial to flourish as a Community Center. The only concern that I have identified at this juncture is the leadership from the church members which centers around a core group that are maturing in age and health. The core support of Rakestraw is mature in age and health challenges and their ability to gain additional resources from their church and/or community is critical to the future of Rakestraw. The Board of Directors or aged persons and their ability to recruit and nurture additional people is critical to its survival.

Over the years in spite of changes in pastoral leadership at Wesley United Methodist Church (Los Angeles), and changes on the board of directors of Rakestraw Memorial the ministry, funding and community support are strong. I believe that the creation of the faith community in this place draws people to share in its presence and future. In addition, the core leadership despite the advanced age of most its members, has remained fairly healthy.

Theological Reflection

In this section, we will again reflect on four thought provoking questions raised in Chapter two of this project: (1) Can we be people of faith in the midst of diversity? (2) What are we teaching the people? (3) What are we doing for the spiritual health of people? (4) What are we saying to the people?

This church is a historically black congregation that has the reputation of being the first black (Methodist) congregation west of the Mississippi River. It now serves in a neighborhood that has changed and is predominantly Latino in its composition. The church remains largely African American. However, Wesley UMC is unlike some other churches that are located in transitional neighborhoods whose members commute to the community only on Sundays, and focus only on the survival of the church as an entity. At Wesley, the Rakestraw Memorial Center allows the

church to address the spiritual and physical needs of the community in which it is located.

It is clear that this ministry manifests King's concept of the Beloved Community. Rakestraw is very much the presence of the beloved community. There are persons whose witness allows the church to live out its commitment as persons of faith in the midst of diversity. Among the persons who have made a long term contribution to the health and stability of the Rakestraw Memorial Center are Arlinda and his wife, Addie Clark. In the two preceding case studies, women play a vital role in the birthing and cultivating of programs that benefit the community. Here also at Rakestraw, Mrs. Addie Clark is a shining example of one whose witness serves as a symbol of "invisible dignity," "quiet grace," and "unshouted courage" which indicates, "a power of moral character as truth that moves within, connects with other spirit beings, and builds community."⁹ Mrs. Clark's work in building community brings into view the notion of the Beloved Community that is present in Dr. Martin Luther King's teaching and writings.

In the Beloved Community persons are enabled to live healthy and wholesome lives. Rakestraw tries to make this possible in the provision of services that are geared toward self-esteem, life skills, job readiness, and care. The foundation of the Beloved Community is the ideal of love or

⁹ Cannon, Black Womanist Ethics, 159.

what Thurman would call the "love-ethic." Thurman indicated that love brings social change. Love is made visible in this ministry as African Americans and Latinos share space and live among one another, become empowered and learn to cooperate with one another. This love is manifested in the sharing of resources, space and recreation. It is through the manifestation of love as shown by Rakestraw that the community is able to experience and reflect love. The ministry of Rakestraw reflects and demonstrates for the individual what it means to beyond self and represent what we believe in a real and tangible way, the beloved community.

Rakestraw has attempted to live out the core commitments of the Black Church tradition by being that place within the community where persons could find refuge, empowerment, self-esteem, community and personal transformation. In this case, the context of ministry evolved from simply being a response to homelessness to being a sanctuary for children and youth to engage in after-school developmental activities and recreation. The Rakestraw Center is a resource that places it within the center of the community as a place of empowerment and knowledge. It is in the spirit of the Black Church Tradition that Rakestraw serves as a hub of information, a gateway to the larger society and a resource, community and sanctuary.

CHAPTER 5

Reflections on Ministries beyond the Stained Glass Window

This project has taken a look beyond the stained glass windows to examine means by which churches can sustain a viable outreach ministry. It has taken as a part of its framework a range of ideas drawn from Womanist theology and ethics in order to explore traditions and core commitments that are reflected in the long history of the Black Church with respect to its relationship to both a worshipping community and its social witness.

It has explored the church's ability to finance its outreach ministry and social witness. In order to do this some attention was given to non-traditional ways of financing ministries including those that require partnerships with other social agencies that represent and provide state or federal funds.

At the core of this project are three specific ministries that demonstrate the leadership, commitment, courage, and persistence of African American women in three different settings. The role of these women in these selected ministries provide other faith communities within the California Pacific Annual Conference with tangible examples of how faithful witness can recognize the needs of the community and find the necessary resources to respond to these needs. Their leadership in difficult

situations can help others frame and rethink their own understandings of leadership and ministry.

The major learning that this project has provided revolves around the language for analyzing in theological terms the types of ministries that are reflected in these three case studies. In other words, this study has provided a new lens for theological engagement. It has provided a new lens for understanding the ministry of presence, in terms of mission, and in terms of finance. It is the lens that allows for an outreach ministry that is able to sustain itself beyond the stained glass window. It further has given insight to three key areas of the Christian experience: *imago dei*, love and community.

It also reflects on the role of the Black church in terms of certain core commitments that underlie each of these case studies. These commitments help to explain the role of the Black church within the historical context and the contemporary situation. As I reflect upon this model of ministry that focuses on church and community living and working together it becomes critical that each entity is able to assess its resources—(time, resources, and gifts) in order to build upon its assets to become a health, and viable community. We have explored how three specific cases attempt to meet the needs of the community.

The three case studies provide for us opportunities to review and learn from others instead of reinventing the wheel. In looking at the three

models, I have gleaned that there are several key factors that one must consider in providing outreach ministry. These include host/sponsor church support, leadership, engaged board of directors and a variety of finance resourcing.

Host/Sponsor church support

In looking at the three cases, it is clear that the most critical issue to any successful ministry must involve the congregation from whom the ministry emerges. It is important that a volunteer base have the agenda and labor to achieve the identified needs. In the case of Crenshaw United Methodist Church, although the church supported Saturday School, it was never asked to provide support to a fee-for-service program. This is one area that may be of some concern in new program development. In the second case study, Zaferia grew out of a ministry with Wesley United Methodist Church with a few volunteers from the congregation. The Zaferia Board of Directors was unable to sustain a viable ministry without the support a local church or strong board of directors. Rakestraw is a good example of host/sponsor church remaining engaged and involved in the physical and spiritual life of the community.

Leadership

The second issue is that of leadership which is critical to the survival of an organization particularly a non-profit faith-based program. The United Methodist Church polity allows the Pastor to be assigned according to the Bishop, therefore it is critical that leadership on a local level and board of directors level be strong and in place. The success of the program rests with the board of directors, who have ultimate accountability of the program. Rakestraw has been able to thrive in its ministry because of a strong host/sponsor ministry and strong board of directors. Rakestraw's Board of directors plays an active role in the day-to-day operations of the program and the solicitation of support from the wider community. Additionally, Rakestraw has a strong congregation and community support.

The New Beginnings/New Transitions LACOE project did not involve a board of directors at all. It may have been helpful to have strong leadership and partnerships. Absence of such an organizational structure caused critical issues to be overlooked and placed the CUMC at financial risk. The program relied on the efforts of the pastor, the associate pastor and one church volunteer to operate this ministry. The absence of a broader base of persons involved with the program placed the participants and church at risk. The strength of the United Methodist Church is in its' structure, in this case the role of the Administrative Council

was not explored. This would have provided one avenue for greater participation of the local church.

Diversity of Funding

These three ministries benefited from charitable choice through their connections with the various public agencies (LACOE, EDD). It was by public funds that these ministries were able to expand and provide needed community service that enhanced the residents' imago dei, love and community. Zaferia and Rakestraw operate under the 501©3 model which provides for a strengthened organization in meeting the challenges and requirements of using public funds.

The inability of the ministry to sustain itself through a broad financial base, strong leadership and strong host/sponsor attributed to decreased services.

When a ministry derives its' funding from a variety of resources it is more likely to support and maintain a sustainable ministry. Rakestraw has a variety of funding resources including grants and foundations. Zaferia initially had several contracts with the state of California Employment Development Center but did not continue applying for various funds including denominational grants and foundations. Effective leadership is necessary to apply for these grants in a timely manner. Finding the necessary resources by the specific deadlines is important not only

persons who work for the program as well as those persons who receive the services.

Implications for the Ebony Prophets

Ebony Prophets may in particular want to consider these three cases as critical examples of how programs can get started, maintain themselves and meet the needs of the community. The three cases provide three different models, in three difference communities. They highlight examples of success and closure due to the lack of host/sponsorship, leadership and a diverse financial base.

As I pastor, Hollypark United Methodist Church I realize that it is critical to the long-term survival of a ministry that the ministry merges out develops and takes shape based on the resources and assets that are currently available in the congregation. If the leadership of a church is unwilling to invest their time, talent and money to a specific project then based on my three cases there is not a sufficient basis to consider the project as an opportunity for effective ministry. However, if the congregation recognizes its resources and collaborates with the community to explore and utilize a board base of opportunities, leadership and financial support, then ministry or social outreach can be effective and sustainable.

It is critical that the organization is engaged in ministry and not just a few personalities. Sound organization entails recognizing the financial viability of the church in funding ministry as well as the strengths of the organization in meeting the accountability required in the use of public funds. Churches must seek to recognize the professional gifts of those who sit in the pews and how these can bring about transformation for the church and the community. If a church chooses to use a 501(c)(3), this may provide one means to expand its ministries capacity and resources. It further provides leadership opportunities that create necessary partnerships that will enhance the church's outreach ministries. Ebony prophets and all those who must look beyond traditional sources of financing outreach ministries may find in this project ways to embody the church's ministry as to take their core commitments beyond the stained glass windows.

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